United Nations

A/52/352

General Assembly

Distr.: General
16 September 1997

Original: English

Fifty-second session
Item 107 of the provisional agenda*
Advancement of women

Activities of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 50/163 of 22 December 1995, requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its fifty-second session a report on the activities of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).

2. In that resolution, the General Assembly emphasized the unique function of the Institute as the only entity within the United Nations system devoted exclusively to research and training for the integration of women in development; stressed the importance of making its research findings available for policy purposes and operational activities; commended the efforts of the Institute to address poverty, statistics and indicators in gender issues, communications, natural resources and sustainable development, water, sanitation and waste management, renewable sources of energy, and issues related to different population groups, such as elderly and displaced women, refugee and migrant women and women in rural areas; encouraged the Institute to develop further active and close cooperation with the specialized agencies and related organizations of the United Nations system and with other institutions, such as universities and research institutions, so as to promote programmes that contribute to the advancement of women; and reiterated the importance of maintaining the level of resources devoted to independent research and related training activities that are crucial for the situation of women.

3. In accordance with its mandate and the recommendations of its Board of Trustees, the Institute has made every effort to strengthen its dual approach as both an agent for sensitization on the role of women in the sustainable development process and in the mainstreaming of gender analysis and methodological evaluation, and as a centre for specialized research, training and advocacy, particularly in the key areas affecting the advancement of women and in facilitating their empowerment and inclusion as equal partners in development. The present report covers the period since the submission of the Secretary-General's previous report on INSTRAW(A/50/538) in October 1995.

II. Programme framework for the biennium 1996-1997

4. The Institute's work programme for the biennium 1996-1997 was prepared taking into consideration a threefold process: first, the changes of global scope at both the economic and social levels and how women are being affected by them; second, the policy decisions, mandates

* A/52/150 and Corr.1.

97-24320 (E) 300997 031097

and plans of action of the different United Nations conferences as well as several measures of an institutional nature pertaining to the functioning of the United Nations system; and third, the concrete issues related to the implementation of the 1996-1997 work programme of INSTRAW, including institutional matters relevant to the functioning of the Institute.

5. At the Fourth World Conference on Women held at Beijing in September 1995, it became ever more clear that women's issues were global and universal and that equality of opportunity for all people was essential to the construction of just and democratic societies. The Platform for Action adopted at the Conference was established as a powerful tool for the empowerment of women, aimed at removing all the obstacles to women's active participation in public and private life by promoting their full and equal participation in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making processes. It called for the integration of a gender perspective in all policies and programmes.

6. Bearing in mind the mandate of INSTRAW, which is to serve as a vehicle on the international level for the purpose of undertaking research and establishing training programmes to contribute to the integration and mobilization of women in development, to raise awareness of women's issues worldwide and to assist women to meet new challenges and directions, the Institute's work programme for the biennium 1996-1997 involved activities related to research, training, information dissemination and networking. In addition, the Institute participated actively in policy coordination within the United Nations system.

7. The Institute's research and training programmes aim to be linked directly to the major concerns of the international community as expressed in the plans and programmes of action of the United Nations global conferences, particularly of the Fourth World Conference on Women. The Institute's work programme for the biennium was also structured so as to incorporate considerations emanating from the specific objectives set out by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993) and the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994); as well as the objectives set out by the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (Istanbul, June 1996). The programme was also developed under the guidance and with the approval of the INSTRAW Board of Trustees, fulfilling the requirements of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women 1996-2001 and specific recommendations of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

8. The specific activities undertaken respond to the need to understand and correct the societal obstacles that constrain women's participation and to recognize fully, value and mobilize women's dynamic involvement in the development process. The issue of empowerment is embedded in the four priority programmes of the research and training programme of the Institute, namely: (a) women, economic and political empowerment; (b) statistics and indicators on gender issues; (c) women, environment and sustainable development; (d) women, media and communications.

III. Highlights of the Institute's programme of activities

9. The Institute s programme for the biennium was built around those four broad themes, which are discussed in detail below.

A. Women's empowerment

10. The Institute's programme entitled "Women in decision-making and leadership" seeks to increase the participation of women in political decision-making. The programme entails a research component for the preparation of a background paper presenting an overview of the global situation of women in the political arena and the barriers limiting their participation, three case studies, including a gender analysis of the political power structures (within the Government and the civil society of selected developing countries) and a report on the progress of women's participation in political decision-making bodies within those countries. Those documents will be published and will also serve as a basis for the preparation of resource materials containing general guidelines and suggestions for increasing women's participation in decision-making and leadership.

11. Preliminary work has been carried out for the background paper and three case studies to be conducted in Chile, Kenya and the Philippines. In selecting those countries, INSTRAW considered both regional representativeness and the possibility of analysing women in governmental positions in different country situations.

12. INSTRAW hosted and participated in an expert group meeting on political decision-making and conflict resolution: the impact of gender differences, organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women in cooperation with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute at INSTRAW headquarters at Santo Domingo in October 1996.

The recommendations of the meeting were available to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-first session (10-21 March 1997).

B. Statistics and indicators on gender issues

13. Adequate and reliable statistics are basic tools for designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programmes and projects. The INSTRAW programme on statistics and indicators on gender issues is aimed at contributing to the development of new and the improvement of existing statistical concepts and methodologies.

14. Following the recommendations contained in its publication *Measurement and Valuation of Unpaid Contribution: Accounting through Time and Output*,[1] INSTRAW initiated actual applications of the valuation techniques and methodologies developed in Canada, Finland and Nepal. Using the existing data in those countries, output-based valuation techniques were applied to impute monetary values to goods and services produced in and for the household. Those three countries were selected on the basis of the availability and quality of time-use and other collateral data collected at the national level, as well as accessibility to those data.

15. In 1996, INSTRAW published *Valuation of Household Production and the Satellite Accounts*,[2] a sequel to the above-mentioned study, in which it describes the procedure followed in the actual application of the framework and the imputation of monetary values to goods and services produced in the household for its own consumption. Derived values of unpaid household production were presented in comparison with the values of regular gross domestic product for each country. The results give indications of the pattern and level of interaction between the paid/market and unpaid/household production in different scenarios.

16. The time-use survey methodology designed by INSTRAW for less developed countries was at the same time fully implemented in the Dominican Republic. In collaboration with the national statistics office, the first national survey on time use by women and men in the country was conducted in 1995, and the corresponding database was completed in 1996. The implementation of the survey proved the applicability of the methodology and provided a body of experience that may be useful in replicating the survey in other developing countries. Values have been imputed and are contained in a report to be published in late 1997. One of the immediate objectives of the study is to establish a mechanism to reflect the estimated values of the satellite accounts on unpaid household production in the relevant publication of the central bank of the Dominican Republic.

17. Based on the results of the above-mentioned studies and the overall experience gained by INSTRAW in collecting new statistical information, such as time-use data, and in measuring and valuing unpaid work, INSTRAW has prepared guidelines and training materials on the collection, processing and analysis of data on satellite accounts on women's and men's unpaid work for possible replication in other countries.

18. During the period under review, INSTRAW prepared a training package on the use of statistics and indicators on gender issues in policy design, which contains materials, computerized statistical models and exercises designed to enhance users' understanding of and skills in utilizing gender-specific statistics and indicators in designing policies and development programmes. The package is now in a preliminary format and is ready for pilot testing.

19. INSTRAW also participated in the twenty-ninth session of the Statistical Commission (New York, 11-14 February 1997), at which specific inputs for the discussion of issues related to economic statistics and national accounts and/or demographic and social statistics were provided.

C. Women, environment and sustainable development

20. The women, environment and sustainable development programme uses a holistic and interdisciplinary approach to sectoral issues in the fields of environmental protection, water supply and sanitation; water resources management; waste management; and new and renewable sources of energy, from the point of view of women as users and producers. It addresses in an integrated manner women's roles and activities in areas such as poverty eradication, population growth, health, education/training, water, energy, agriculture, forestry and the like.

21. As a result of the importance that the Board of Trustees has placed on the development of training instruments, special emphasis has been given to the preparation of training materials in the field of environment and sustainable development to advance women's understanding of the plethora of complex issues analysed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and contained in Agenda 21.

22. Since 1982, INSTRAW has been formulating policy and conducting research and training on water supply and

sanitation and on the development of new and renewable sources of energy, incorporating the perspective of the status of women and their contribution to socio-economic development.

1. Multimedia modular training package on women, environmental management and sustainable development

23. In 1995, INSTRAW prepared a prototype training package on women, environmental management and sustainable development in cooperation with the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization at Turin, Italy. The training package was revised, finalized and distributed in 1996 and 1997. The revision was completed after a subregional training seminar on women, environmental management and sustainable development for Central and Eastern European countries was held at Turin, from 23 to 27 September 1996.

24. The training package on women, environmental management and sustainable development was prepared as a major part of the Institute's programme on women and sustainable development and in response and follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, particularly Agenda 21, the Plan of Action adopted at the World Summit on Social Development and the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women. The training package contains materials as well as decisions and recommendations from various conferences and meetings, within and outside the United Nations system. The training package aims to contribute to an integrated approach in the organization and management of environmental policies and programmes through the integration of women's needs as well as their participation in planning, management, implementation and evaluation of environmental programmes and projects. The subject matter is complex, multidisciplinary and integrated into every aspect of society. The purpose of the training package is not to tackle each issue but rather to present overall existing problems and possible solutions and policies on various aspects of the subject matter. Further adaptations for specific country situations should be explored by trainers, university professors and experts in this area.

25. The training package consists of 400 pages of training text, 170 transparencies, a trainer's guide, a bibliography and audio-visual support material.

26. The flexibility of the training package is assured by the parallel activity, that is, the possibility to train different target groups simultaneously. The modular training methodology is adaptable to the individual needs of users. Each module is supplemented by a pedagogical scheme, a lesson plan, audio-visual support material, additional reading material, bibliographies, key issue checklists for group work, evaluation forms for participants and trainers and a trainer's guide. The modular programme is designed for on-site training and includes practical how-to materials.

27. The training package has been developed for the following target groups:

(a) Senior officials of ministries of environment, natural resources, planning, women's affairs, education, health and so on;

(b) Development planners and provincial or local authorities in charge of environmental programmes and projects;

(c) Engineers in charge of designing technologies for environmental projects;

(d) University professors, trainers and managers of national training institutes and educational institutions training staff on various aspects of women, environmental management and sustainable development;

(e) Representatives of non-governmental and women's organizations involved in environmental projects.

28. The multimedia training package on women, environmental management and sustainable development consists of five modular units, namely:

(a) Agenda 21;

(b) Women and environmental health;

(c) Women as agents of change in the development sector;

(d) Women as managers of the environment;

(e) Women, environmental indicators and capacity-building programmes.

29. The training package is available in English. Two thousand copies of the promotional leaflet were also published and widely distributed. The training package was revised, finalized and printed at the International Training Centre in 1996.

2. Subregional training seminar on women, environmental management and sustainable development

30. INSTRAW, in cooperation with the International Training Centre, organized a subregional training seminar on women, environmental management and sustainable development for Central and Eastern Europe, held at Turin

from 23 to 27 September 1996. The seminar was attended by participants from Bulgaria (one participant), the Czech Republic (two participants), Hungary (two participants), Latvia (one participant), Poland (four participants), Romania (three participants) and Slovakia (one participant). The seminar was conducted using the Institute's training package on women, environmental management and sustainable development. At the end of the substantive presentations, each participant presented a plan of action, which consisted of their application of the training package within their jobs and organizations. The presentations were videotaped for use in future activities.

31. Participants were given two evaluation forms: one to evaluate the training package — content, presentation, transparencies; and one to evaluate the overall training seminar — training methodology, conduct of the presentation and organizational and logistical arrangements. All participants evaluated both the training package and the seminar positively. They also expressed the need to have that type of training seminar at the national level. Some participants said they would try to translate the training package into their languages.

32. The final report of the seminar included a profile of the participants (admission requirements, entry profile), the objectives of the seminar, a description of the structure and content of the modular training package and of the structure and implementation of the seminar, methodology, evaluation results, recommendations of participants, conclusions and annexes (environmental data, list of participants, timetable, list of documents distributed, list of documents produced by the participants and evaluation questionnaires).

33. The report was prepared at the International Training Centre and finalized by INSTRAW. One thousand copies were printed at the Centre. Each participant received 30 copies for further distribution in their countries. The report was also distributed to INSTRAW focal points, bodies of the United Nations system, permanent missions to the United Nations and relevant non-governmental and women's organizations involved in environmental activities.

3. Inter-agency activities and participation in intergovernmental meetings

34. The contribution of INSTRAW to sustainable development and environmental management included participation in the Commission on Sustainable Development; the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly on the review and appraisal of Agenda 21; meetings of the United Nations Steering Committee for Water Supply and Sanitation; and the Administrative Committee on Coordination Subcommittee on Water Resources. As a result of the Institute's inputs, women's roles and activities in the water sector were well reflected in the following areas: integrated water resources development and management; drinking water supply and sanitation; water and sustainable urban development; water for sustainable food production; and rural development. The main item of discussion was "Comprehensive assessment of the freshwater resources of the world", prepared jointly by the Swedish Environment Institute and a number of United Nations bodies and agencies. INSTRAW contributed substantively to a background report on gender and water, which was prepared by the Swedish Environment Institute.

35. INSTRAW participated in the third session of the Committee on Natural Resources (New York, 6-16 May 1996). At the meetings of the Subcommittee on Water Resources, under the item entitled "United Nations activities", INSTRAW provided substantive inputs on the current roles and position of women in water resources management, outlining constraints and possible solutions.

36. INSTRAW participated in the meetings of the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development at its second session (New York, 12-23 February 1996). INSTRAW presented a statement focusing on current roles and the position of women in energy planning, areas for further research on women and energy and the Institute's research and training activities in the area of renewable sources of energy.

37. INSTRAW representatives attended the Ad Hoc Inter-agency Meeting on Energy at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Paris, 18 and 19 December 1996). The participants discussed, *inter alia*, conducting an inventory of energy-related programmes and activities within the United Nations system, assessment of the linkages between current energy activities and sustainable development and assessment of cooperation and coordination of energy activities at the global, regional and national levels with a special focus on the country level.

38. INSTRAW participated in a workshop on the role of women in sustainable development (Abidjan, 11-13 November 1996), which was jointly organized by the United Nations Department for Development Support and Management Services and the African Energy Programme of the African Development Bank. The Institute's Acting Director gave a keynote presentation on the topic "Policies and strategies for women's participation in sustainable energy development", and chaired a working group on the same topic.

39. The Institute also provided substantive inputs to the following reports: an inventory of ongoing energy-oriented programmes and activities within the United Nations system for the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fifth session; a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, through the Economic and Social Council, on the possibilities of strengthening the coordination of organizations and bodies of the United Nations system in the field of energy within the framework of the Administrative Committee on Coordination; and contributions on women and water supply and sanitation for the report of the Secretary-General on fresh water

40. INSTRAW hosted an expert group meeting organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women on "Women, population and sustainable development: the road from Rio, Cairo and Beijing" (Santo Domingo, November 1996). The meeting focused on the conceptual and methodological aspects of crucial links between population and sustainable development, incorporating a gender perspective with emphasis on women's role in decision-making at all levels, policy perspectives on implementation of the outputs of the environment and development conference at Rio de Janeiro, the population conference at Cairo and the women's conference at Beijing and recommendations on women, population and sustainable development. The Acting Director of INSTRAW presented a statement on those issues and gave an overview of the Institute's programme on women, environment and sustainable development. The Institute's training package on women, environmental management and sustainable development was presented to the participants and experts. Recommendations of that meeting were available at the forty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 1997.

D. Women, media and communications

41. The programme entitled "Empowering women through the use of computer-mediated communication technologies" involves research in the Latin American and Caribbean region on the extent to which women's organizations are using computer-mediated communication. INSTRAW will prepare a manual based on the findings of that research to assist women's organizations in maximizing the use of computer-mediated communication for research, training and education, advocacy, networking, exchange of information and so on.

42. Preliminary research conducted by INSTRAW in 1995 for presentation at the NGO Forum on Women, held at Huairou, China, in conjunction with the Fourth World Conference on Women, suggested that many women's organizations in the region had access to computer-mediated communication technology, but lacked sufficient and adequate training to use it to its maximum potential. With that in mind, INSTRAW in 1996 initiated a survey aimed at testing this working hypothesis and at identifying the training and other needs of women's organizations in the effective use of computer-mediated communication.

43. A total of 133 women's organizations or organizations with a women's component or programme in the region responded to a questionnaire sent out by INSTRAW. In-depth interviews were conducted with a selected number of organizations that represented "best practice" in the use of computer-mediated communication in their work. The survey focused principally on access to hardware, the type and extent of training, the type and frequency of electronic tools used, perceived obstacles to full use of computer-mediated communication and the features considered desirable in a manual.

44. The data have been analysed and a first draft of the report is currently being completed. Preliminary analysis of the data confirms that while many women's organizations in the region have access to the necessary hardware for electronic communications, as well as an account with a service provider, they make limited use of computer-mediated communication.

45. With those considerations in mind, INSTRAW will prepare user-friendly, target-specific manuals aimed at promoting the use of computer-mediated communication not only for making communication more effective and economical, but also for easing the access to information for research and advocacy purposes. The use of computer-mediated communication in publishing will also be promoted. Specifically, the manual will guide the user to specific sites in the United Nations that might be of interest to women and will provide a directory of sites by topic of interest to women's organizations. The manual will also document cases of effective use of computer-mediated communication for publishing, networking and so on. The results of those efforts will be linked to the joint WomenWatch project, in which INSTRAW participates along with the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women.

E. Other activities related to research and training

46. In response to a request of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Norwegian Institute of Human Rights drafted a manual for human rights monitoring for which INSTRAW prepared a chapter on monitoring the rights of women.

47. In collaboration with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), INSTRAW organized a round table on women and human settlements in conflict zones at Habitat II. INSTRAW prepared all background documentation for the round table and selected the panellists. Participants included researchers, practitioners, politicians and representatives of United Nations agencies. The Latin American and Caribbean, African, Asian and European regions were represented. Two articles about the round table were published in *Habitat Watch*, the Conference's daily newspaper. The Institute is in the final process of editing the presentations made at the round table for publication.

48. In the area of inter-agency collaboration, INSTRAW was actively involved in and present at the meeting of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality as part of the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, and prepared contributions to the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system, which was presented at the coordination segment of the 1997 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council.

49. INSTRAW participated in the symposium on women and mainstreaming organized by the United Nations University at its headquarters (Tokyo, June 1996). For the symposium, the Institute presented three substantive papers related to the concept of mainstreaming gender, gender in the economy and gender in the society.

50. In the Dominican Republic, INSTRAW has been part of the inter-agency efforts carried out by the United Nations system in the country and has participated in the monthly meetings of the heads of United Nations agencies at the duty station.

51. INSTRAW has attended to the discussions of various issues in the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly, including those on statistics, water, waste management, renewable sources of energy, older persons, migration and the informal sector of the economy.

F. Information, documentation and communication

52. The objectives of the information, documentation and communication programme are to promote the research and training programmes through the preparation of public information materials; to strengthen the channels for worldwide dissemination of information on gender and women and development as related to the Institute's work programme; to reinforce networking and liaison activities with organizations and institutions working in gender and women and development issues; and to develop appropriate communications support in order to facilitate access to information and communications systems of other bodies and organizations in the United Nations system and, wherever possible, to explore and develop new and more effective means of communicating information and ideas related to the empowerment of women.

53. During the period under review, the internal printing facility of INSTRAW complied with the Institute's printing requirements by printing most of the materials needed and supervising the materials printed outside. Various publications, including research studies, numerous Board documents (in three languages), *INSTRAW News* (in three languages) and public information materials, flyers and brochures were printed internally (see annex). In addition, various forms and types of stationery were printed.

54. The Institute entered into a very successful agreement with the United Nations Publications Service by which its publications are sold at the United Nations bookstores in New York and Geneva. Also as part of the agreement, INSTRAW publications will be distributed at many international conferences and fairs.

55. As for the production of public information materials, one special double issue (71 pages) of *INSTRAW News* was printed in 1996. That issue dealt with the advancement of women as a structural matter, the analysis of which included the whole spectrum of social endeavours. It also featured a special focus on Habitat II. The issue included a supplement on the INSTRAW network of focal points. A special issue focusing on women and environmental issues was printed in the first half of 1997 and was presented at the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly in June 1997. That issue included two supplements — one containing strategic objective K from the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the other concerning agreements for sustaining the future environment, such as the various conventions on biodiversity, climate change and desertification. A second issue was printed in 1997 and

centred on capacity-building in the context of environmental issues.

56. The multimedia interactive exhibit officially hosted by INSTRAW for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations has been displaced in several important cities of the host country of INSTRAW, beginning in one of the most prestigious universities in the city of Santiago, and continuing to the town hall of Dajabon and to Puerto Plata and Jarabacoa. The exhibit is expected to stimulate further interest in the overall work of the United Nations and in INSTRAW activities among students, women's organizations and the Dominican population.

57. In connection with International Women's Day 1997, INSTRAW launched its Web page, which is located at the United Nations Web site. Visitors to the page can get information on the Institute's mandate, its Board of Trustees, its research and training programmes and its publications, as well as information on its network of focal points. The INSTRAW Web page is linked to the WomenWatch project, which was also launched in celebration of International Women's Day, 1997 in New York.

58. INSTRAW participated in the twenty-second session of the Joint United Nations Information Committee, (Geneva, 3-5 July 1996), as well as various ad hoc meetings held at the Secretariat. The Institute, along with other members of the Committee, also participated in a joint exhibition at the World Food Summit (Rome, 13-17 November 1996). INSTRAW publications, flyers and brochures were available for distribution at the exhibit. The Institute's publications were also distributed at Habitat II.

59. The Institute, along with other bodies and agencies of the United Nations system, also participated in the international information fairs organized by the Department of Public Information and held at United Nations Headquarters.

60. To further enhance communication possibilities in extending the outreach of the Institute's work, an e-mail address was installed at the Institute in 1996.

61. The INSTRAW Documentation Centre received numerous documents (approximately 1,400) during the period under review from sources both within and outside the United Nations system on topics related to its work. Those documents are catalogued as received and are thus available for consultation. Each year numerous requests are received from students at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels for information on gender and women and development issues.

IV. The Institute's advocacy network

62. INSTRAW relies on international networking as an important instrument in carrying out its catalytic function and bases its work on cooperative arrangements with mainstream United Nations organizations and bodies, governmental and non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and women's organizations and groups. The Institute's network of focal points is composed of 41 governmental, non-governmental, academic, research and training institutions located in all regions of the world.

63. Through its networking activities, INSTRAW is able to formulate objectives based on sound knowledge of problems affecting women at the regional and national levels, to transmit grass-roots experiences to decision makers, to secure substantive changes on behalf of women and to promote development policies concerning both men and women.

64. In keeping with its mandate and as reported to the INSTRAW Board of Trustees at its seventeenth session, INSTRAW is reviewing and redefining its relationship with focal points with the objective of establishing a more sound and effective affiliation. Key issues such as objectives and benefits of a networking relationship with focal points, nomination procedures, contributions, and the possibility of increasing the number of focal points in each country are being revised.

V. Financial situation of the Institute

65. INSTRAW is funded solely by voluntary contributions. Since its establishment the Institute has received pledges from more than 72 Member States, both developed and developing countries. Financial stability is crucial to the Institute's ability to continue its research, training and information programmes, as approved by its Board of Trustees. Therefore, fund-raising efforts remain a crucial component of the Institute's programme of activities. To that end, INSTRAW maintains continued contact with donor countries in order to secure the level of contribution required for the implementation of its programme of work. Voluntary contributions received for the biennium 1996-1997, as at the date of the present report, amount to $1,506,922. This amount is expected to increase significantly before the end of the biennium through additional contributions to be received from donor countries that have pledged but have not yet paid their contributions.

66. The Institute wishes to express its recognition to those Member States that have consistently supported INSTRAW through their contributions to the Trust Fund since the Institute's inception, as well as to all those which have joined them more recently.

67. As an autonomous institution, INSTRAW is fully responsible for providing administrative support to all its programmes. This includes financial management and budgetary controls, monitoring of financial commitments, recruitment and personnel administration, procurement and other activities within the delegation of authority granted by the Secretary-General. Despite the limitations imposed by external circumstances and encountered by the Institute during the period under review, INSTRAW has carried out the biennial programme of work.

68. The importance of and need for research, training and information activities related to women and development is a prerequisite not only for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, but also for the improvement of women's position and status in society. In that regard, the firm support of Member States is essential, as it allows the Institute to carry out its mandate of independent research, the results of which foster policy and policy coordination as well as operational activities.

VI. Conclusions

69. The Institute's activities in research, training, information and documentation place a high priority on the obstacles that limit or impede women from becoming equal partners in development. INSTRAW is at the forefront in establishing new concepts and methods for understanding the specific situation of women in the development process and in broadening the empirical and analytical parameters for such understanding. The work of the Institute contributes to mainstreaming women's concerns into sustainable development policies both within and outside the United Nations system.

70. INSTRAW regards as crucial the empowerment of women and their capacity to participate and influence the decisions and processes that affect their lives. The process of economic and political empowerment is fundamental if women are to break out of the inequitable situations in which they find themselves. The change in perceptions and the integration of women in the development process as equal actors and not as a vulnerable group is central to the work of INSTRAW.

71. The current developmental context requires more in-depth and innovative research to better understand the complexities affecting women throughout their life cycle. Continued efforts in the areas of training and information are also imperative in order to acknowledge and promote women's essential contribution to development and to bridge the gap between the situation of women and the prevailing development practices. The Institute's activities are an integral part of the endeavours of the United Nations to mainstream gender into both policy and operational activities and hence to contribute to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

72. The unique function of the Institute, as the only entity within the United Nations system devoted exclusively to research and training for the integration of women in development, has been stressed both by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. A reinforced commitment to research, training and information is fundamental to further progress towards sustainable development and the advancement of women.

Notes

[1] *Measurement and Valuation of Unpaid Contribution: Accounting through Time and Output* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.III.C.3), 1995.

[2] *Valuation of Household Production and the Satellite Accounts* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.III.C.4), 1996.

Annex

Activities carried out by the printing unit during 1996-1997

During the biennium 1996-1997, the printing unit complied with all the printing requirements of the Institute, both by printing most of the materials needed as well as by supervising the materials printed outside, which included full-colour covers and public information materials as well as a training package.

The work of the unit included the preparation of layouts of publications in several languages, proof-reading and monitoring of the work performed outside the Institute, such as preparation of designs, translation and printing, obtaining quotes for services, equipment and supplies needed (including preparation of metal plates, designs and so on). On several occasions the Publications Assistant provided translation services.

The unit is responsible for the worldwide distribution of all printed materials through various means, such as the local post office, express parcel service or pouch.

The unit also provided photocopying services, which amounted to about 90,000 photocopies per year.

The following items were printed during the period:

Reports

Rapport sur l'atelier sous-régional sur statistiques et indicateurs concernant les femmes (Rabat, 13-17 December 1993), 270 pp. Santo Domingo: INSTRAW, October 1996.

National reports from the sub-regional training seminar on women, environmental management and sustainable development (23-27 September 1996), 280 pp. Turin, Italy: INSTRAW and ILO, 1996.

Research studies

Gender Concepts in Development Planning: Basic Approach, 2nd ed. 35 pp. Santo Domingo: INSTRAW, 1996. (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.III.C.1).

Valuation of Household Production and the Satellite Accounts, 277 pp. Santo Domingo: INSTRAW, 1996. (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.III.C.4).

Public information

Brochure: *INSTRAW Biennium 1996/97 Profile*, 1996.

Brochure: *Medición de la Contribución de la Mujer al Desarrollo Implicaciones de Políticas*, 1996.

Brochure: *Measuring Women's Unpaid Work*, April/May 1996 (reprint of 1995 brochure of the United Nations Department of Public Information).

Brochure: *INSTRAW Update: Measuring Unpaid Work*, April 1996.

Brochure: *United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women* (description of the Institute's work) May 1996.

Brochure: *Round Table on Women and Human Settlements in Conflict Zones*, June 1996.

Brochure: Objectifs et recommandations: *Rapport sur l'atelier sous-régional sur statistiques et indicateurs concernant les femmes*.

Brochure: *INSTRAW Focal Points*, September 1996.

Flyer: *What Is INSTRAW?*, October 1996.

Brochure: *Habitat II: Women and Human Settlements in Conflict Zones*, February 1997.

Brochure: *Fourth World Conference on Women: Platform for Action/Strategic Objective K: Women and the Environment*, March 1997.

Brochure: *Agreements for Sustaining the Future Environment*, June 1997.

INSTRAW News

INSTRAW News No. 24/25 — special issue 1996: "The Process of the Advancement of Women".

INSTRAW News No. 26, special issue, first semester 1997: "Earth Summit + 5" and "Women's Vision".

Others

Board documents: 24 documents in English, French and Spanish representing about 12,900 printed pages in February 1996. Seventy-three print orders for 428 pages of documents in English, French and Spanish representing about 42,425 printed pages in February 1997.

Stationery: complimentary slips, memorandum forms, letterhead stationery, facsimile forms, invitations, envelopes and others.

UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/52/353
16 September 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fifty-second session
Item 71 of the provisional agenda*

GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Letter dated 15 September 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the memorandum issued by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 12 September 1997 with regard to the recent acceleration of the arms build-up by the United States of America and south Korean authorities.

I would be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 71 of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) KIM Hoyng U
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative

* A/52/150 and Corr.1.

ANNEX

Memorandum issued by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 12 September 1997

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND SOUTH KOREAN AUTHORITIES MUST PUT AN IMMEDIATE STOP TO THE ACCELERATED ARMS BUILD-UP TAKING PLACE BEHIND THE SCREEN OF THE TALKS

Military equipment is being introduced into south Korea as a result of the war policy being pursued against the idea of peace, and this creates a very dangerous situation on the Korean peninsula that can be seen on the eve of a war.

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, considering that the large-scale arms build-up by the south Korean authorities with the backing of the United States of America, is a very dangerous act, posing threats to peace on the Korean peninsula and in Asia, publishes this memorandum to draw the attention of the world to this.

1. While clamouring about a "new cold war around the Korean peninsula", the south Korean authorities have sharply increased the military budget every year, allegedly to cope with it.

The military spending of south Korea went up to US$ 17,940 million this year from $11,380 million in 1992. This is an increase of 58 per cent in a matter of five years.

This goes against the worldwide trend towards arms reduction. The rate of increase of south Korea's military budget reached 49.2 per cent in the period from 1992 to 1996. That figure is more than twice the rate of increase of military expenditure in countries in strife-torn areas in the corresponding period.

According to the "Report on World Military Expenditure and Arms Sales for 1993 and 1994", published by the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency in the beginning of 1995, the military spending of south Korea was tenth in the world in 1993. (The south Korean paper Siminui Shinmun, 21-27 August 1995)

This proves that since Kim Yong Sam's seizure of power, south Korea has become one of the areas with the greatest military expenditures in the world.

In the United States paper Defense News it was stated that south Korea took the threat from north Korea as a pretext for its arms build-up, adding that "the arms build-up of the Republic of Korea goes beyond the defense capacity".

The sharply increasing military spending of south Korea is not for defence, but a product of the war policy pursued against the northern half of Korea.

The amount of money allotted for the purchase of military equipment holds a big share in the military budget of south Korea. The amount of money south Korea squandered on the purchase of military equipment rose to $4,974 million in 1997 from $3,521 million in 1992, a 41 per cent increase.

More money was squandered on the purchase of military equipment under the Kim Yong Sam regime.

The Kim Yong Sam regime allocated a total of $21,384 million for the introduction of military equipment from 1993 to 1997. That figure equals the amount of money appropriated by his predecessors for the same purpose for 10 years.

This suffices to prove that the present authorities of south Korea have pursued a more vicious policy of confrontation and war against the northern half of Korea than preceding military fascist regimes.

With a view to introducing more military equipment, the south Korean authorities announced a "mid-term defense programme" for the period 1998-2002 in December of last year, and they are now trying to appropriate $35,288 million for military spending, up 65 per cent as compared with the amount of money spent in the period from 1993 to 1997.

The south Korean authorities continue to increase military spending, though they are compiling an austere budget because of chronic economic crisis and financial difficulties. That fact goes to prove that their talking about peace is a sophistry to cover their war preparations against the northern half of Korea.

2. The south Korean authorities are now crying for "offensive strategy", and are hell-bent on the large-scale introduction of combat equipment to invade the northern half of Korea.

In particular, they are racing to introduce the latest equipment for the navy and air force for pre-emptive surprise attacks on the depth and strategic vantages in the northern half of Korea.

In the past, the south Korean authorities laid emphasis on the introduction of equipment for coastal defence by small boats and sea areas by destroyers. In the 1990s, they have provided the navy with sea patrol planes and submarines so as to increase "three-dimensional naval operation capacity", including support for aquatic, underwater, aerial and ground operations.

From 1991 to the end of last year, therefore, they deployed for a real war six 1,200 ton class submarines and introduced eight P-3C sea patrol planes and 78 Harpoon surface-to-surface missiles.

They plan to introduce Barak missiles for the navy, a weapon that can be based on large and small warships, two Aegis destroyers and other submarines and amphibious ships of the latest type.

The reinforcement of the air force is aimed at building a "strategic air force" for air supremacy, depth strike and support for ground and naval forces.

From 1994 to this year, the south Korean authorities introduced 48 F-16 fighter planes, 200 AM-RAAM air-to-air missiles and 136 AGM-88b air-to-ground missiles in south Korea, and decided to introduce 72 F-16 fighter planes and some 100 Harpy unmanned attack planes and to import four mid-air refuelling planes by 1999.

They also made public a plan to introduce in the near future more than 60 F-15 fighter planes and 10 Hawk-800 XP reconnaissance planes equipped with the latest electronic facilities.

The south Korean authorities spurred the introduction of the latest types of tanks, armoured vehicles and other military equipment in order to increase the attack capacity of the ground force.

In the last two years, they have introduced 275 M 48A-5 tanks, 30 T-80U tanks, 70 BMP-3 armoured combat vehicles, 100 IGLA anti-aircraft missiles and 150 Metis-M anti-tank missile units, and they announced that in the near future they would ship into south Korea multiple launch rocket systems (29 launchers and 279 rocket shells) and 110 sophisticated ATACMS ground-to-ground missiles.

South Korea has become a big arms market in the world and the first in the world in density of military equipment deployment.

In the April 1996 issue of the United States magazine Arms Trade News it was stated that in 1995 south Korea was fifth in the world in purchasing United States weapons. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute said that in 1996 south Korea was third in purchasing combat equipment.

All the weapons shipped into south Korea are in full readiness for a real war against the northern half of Korea. The whole of south Korea has turned into a huge tinderbox ready to explode at any time.

3. The United States is still pursuing a policy to stifle the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by force of arms, while talking about "peacekeeping" and "four-way talks".

The United States has worked out an adventurous plan for aggression and is reinforcing its troops in south Korea and encouraging the south Korean authorities to round off war preparations.

Above all, the United States completed a war plan against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by adjusting and supplementing the original plan.

It put forward a "south Korea-United States new operation plan 5027" in 1993 adjusting and supplementing the plan worked out in the 1980s. In 1995, under the operation plan, the United States provided the "rapid deployment forces" to be sent to the Korean peninsula from the United States mainland with two aircraft carriers, some 1,000 warplanes, expedition forces of marines in the Pacific region, Patriot missiles and AWACS planes, instead of an aircraft

carrier, one flying corps and two brigades of marines, and set up a new double-track transport system for direct transportation of forces and war matériel.

The United States amended the "United States-Japan defense cooperation guidelines" so as to inveigle Japan into a Korean war.

It also is taking steps to identify the military map coordinate system of the "Republic of Korea" army (Bessel system) with WGS-84 of the United States and the European Union, stage more joint military manoeuvres with south Korea and further strengthen the "south Korea-United States joint operation system".

Under the operation plan against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea the United States is actively encouraging south Korea to introduce a huge amount of military equipment of the latest type.

On 8 April, United States Secretary of Defense William Cohen told the south Korean Defence Minister that mutual identification of weapon systems is important for the strengthening of south Korea-United States joint military strength and for the display of combat power and asked him to purchase more United States-made weapons.

The largest supplier of military equipment to south Korea is the United States.

The "Report on the World Arms Sales Situation in 1995" published by the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency stated that more than 90 per cent of the weapons shipped into south Korea were United States-made weapons, and the south Korean publications said that 80 to 90 per cent of the weapons introduced into south Korea were United States made.

Among the military equipment the United States has already delivered or is going to deliver to south Korea are ATACMS ground-to-ground missiles, Patriot and Stinger ground-to-air missiles and other missiles of various kinds, tanks, armoured vehicles, various kinds of heavy guns, F-15 fighter planes, AH-64 Apache attack helicopters, AWACS planes, the latest types of planes, mid-air refuelling planes, AM-RAAM, Sidewinder and Sparrow air-to-air missiles, Harm and Maverick air-to-ground missiles, Aegis destroyers, Harpoon surface-to-surface missiles and Sea Sparrow ship-to-air missiles.

While crying for the introduction of diversified military equipment, the south Korean authorities are now shipping modern tanks, armoured vehicles, anti-aircraft missiles, anti-tank missiles and helicopters from the Russian Federation as well as the United States, Harpy unmanned attack planes from Israel and huge military equipment from many countries around the world.

South Korea, therefore, has become the arms market of the United States, the Russian Federation and other countries.

All facts show that the United States is the main supplier of military equipment to the south Korean authorities for a war against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and some countries are taking an active part in arms sales to south Korea.

The United States is selling huge weapons to south Korea and reinforcing its troops present in south Korea with the latest types of combat equipment. From 1990 to 1995, the United States replaced the military equipment of its troops present in south Korea with the latest type of equipment used in the Gulf War, and last year it set up a helicopter attack brigade with 30 more AH-64 Apache helicopters and introduced the equipment for one brigade including M1 A1 tanks and armoured vehicles, more than 10,000 items in all, and stockpiled some 700,000 tons of bullets for war materials in reserve.

It also shipped into south Korea from Japan in February of this year the depleted uranium bullets. The nuclear weapon that was used in the Gulf War has a harmful effect on the health of the people.

While arguing that "four-way talks" are needed for peace on the Korean peninsula, the United States is continuously reinforcing combat equipment in south Korea and staging large-scale military manoeuvres with south Korea all year round, aggravating the situation on the peninsula. This is patent proof of the double-dealing tactics of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The United States should not use the question of peace and security on the Korean peninsula any longer to make a mockery of world public opinion.

If war is to be averted and peace preserved on the Korean peninsula, the United States must refrain from encouraging the arms build-up in south Korea and aggravating tensions, and should withdraw its troops from south Korea.

The United States and the south Korean authorities must not make a foolish attempt to test our military potential or intimidate and subdue our people with military threats and provocation. Such reckless action would be a dangerous adventure that could have the catastrophic result of posing a serious threat to peace and security on the Korean peninsula, in Asia and in the rest of the world.

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea expresses expectation that the United Nations and the peace-loving countries around the world will take resolute measures to check the arms build-up of the United States and the south Korean authorities.

A/52/354

Readex
Fiche

United Nations A/52/354

General Assembly

Distr.: General
15 September 1997

Original: English

Fifty-second session
Items 12 and 89 of the provisional agenda*
Report of the Economic and Social Council
Questions relating to information

Statement of the Administrative Committee on Coordination on universal access to basic communication and information services

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session the statement on universal access to basic communication and information services, adopted by the Committee at its session in April 1977, with a view to seeking the endorsement of the Assembly.

* A/52/150 and Corr.1.

97-24387 (E) 300997 021097

Annex

Statement by the Administrative Committee on Coordination on universal access to basic communication and information services

1. The world is in the midst of a communication and information revolution, complemented by an explosive growth in knowledge. Information and knowledge have become a factor *sui generis* in societal and economic development, as generic technologies, information and communication technologies permeate and cut across all areas of economic, social, cultural and political activity. In the process, they affect all social institutions, perceptions and thought processes. Globally, the information and communication sector is already expanding at twice the rate of the world economy. Decreasing costs of increasingly powerful and reliable hardware and software, as well as the fact that much hardware has become a desktop item, will continue to drive the use of information and communication technologies, facilitating access by ever wider segments of society. That tendency can, however, have profound benefits only if gains in physical access are accompanied by the capacity to exploit those technologies for individual and societal development through the production and dissemination of appropriate content and applications.

2. The communication and information revolution opens up entirely new vistas for the organizations of the United Nations system; it will bring about a dramatic shift not only in the way the organizations operate in the future, and deliver services and products, but also in the way they collaborate and interact with each other and other actors. Indeed, the multilateral system as a whole — specifically development cooperation — has reached a threshold at which its future orientations, strategies and activities must be revisited and adjusted to the new circumstances and opportunities. We are resolved to respond readily and effectively to those new challenges.

3. We recognize that knowledge and information:

(a) Represent the lifeblood of the emerging global information society and its attendant infrastructure;

(b) Are the principal resources of the burgeoning information economy;

(c) Are at the heart of the intensifying globalization trends, and drive the emergence of a tele-economy with new global and societal organizational models (telework, telecommuting, teleservices, telemedicine, distance education, teletraining, teleshopping, telebanking, business facilitation, trade efficiency, trade information and so forth); in many instances, physical location is becoming irrelevant to the ability to receive or deliver products and services;

(d) Will increasingly affect the international division of labour, determine the competitiveness of corporations and national economies, and generate new growth patterns and paradigms;

(e) Will have strategic consequences for the global power constellation. Knowledge, more than ever, is power. Information about what is occurring becomes a central commodity of international relations, and determines the efficiency and effectiveness of any intervention, which is a particular challenge for multilateral actors.

4. Information is not a free good. Comparative advantages will henceforth be expressed in the ability of countries to acquire, organize, retrieve and disseminate information through communication, information-processing technologies and complex information networks to support policy-making and the development process. Abilities in those areas may allow the prevention and resolution of regional and other conflicts, or may deal with new challenges, such as international crime, terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and environmental damage, by charting better informed decisions, all of which are of utmost concern to the organizations of the United Nations system.

5. We are profoundly concerned at the increasingly inadequate distribution of access, resources and opportunities in the information and communication field. The information and technology gap and related inequities between industrialized and developing nations are widening, so that a new type of poverty, information poverty, is being created. Most developing countries, especially the least developed countries, are not sharing in the communication revolution, since they lack:

(a) Affordable access to core information resources, cutting-edge technology and sophisticated telecommunication systems and infrastructure;

(b) The capacity to build, operate, manage and service the technologies involved;

(c) Policies that promote equitable public participation in the information society, as both producers and consumers of information and knowledge;

(d) A workforce trained to develop, maintain and provide the value-added products and services required by the information economy.

We therefore commit the organizations of the United Nations system to assisting developing countries in redressing the present alarming trends.

6. Over the past decades, the organizations of the United Nations system have carried out many projects, at various levels, incorporating communication and information technologies. Today, however, we must acknowledge that such projects were often undertaken in a rather uncoordinated manner. We therefore perceive an urgent need for a more strategic and systematic approach to information and communication technologies and information management, based on a strengthened collaboration among the organizations of the United Nations system.

7. We have concluded that the introduction and use of information and communication technologies and information management must become an integral element of the priority efforts by the United Nations system to promote and secure sustainable human development for all; hence our decision to embrace the objective of establishing universal access to basic communication and information services for all. Information and communication technologies and effective information management offer hitherto unknown possibilities and modalities for the solution of global problems to help fulfil social development goals and to build capacities to effectively use the new technologies. At the same time, infrastructure and services of physical communication, in particular postal services, are a means of communication widely and universally used throughout the world, particularly in developing countries. Postal services are vital and, for the foreseeable future, will remain essential to promoting trade, industry and services of all kinds. Indeed, the value of postal services will be further enhanced as new services, such as hybrid mail, a combination of electronic transmission and physical delivery, gain ground.

8. Individually and jointly, our organizations are already carrying out, or are planning at the national level to embark on, various projects and activities to highlight the catalytic role that multilateral organizations can and must play in this increasingly vital area. We pledge to do more by joining forces in a variety of fields, such as agriculture, education, health, natural resources and environmental management, transport, international trade and commerce, employment and labour issues, housing, infrastructure and community services, small and medium enterprise development, and strengthening of participatory arrangements (see appendix). It is our intention and determination to demonstrate the viability and suitability of the new technologies and effective information management, especially by reaching out to and targeting the rural areas and most impoverished segments of society so often bypassed by the benefits of technological progress. Unless we are able to show that information and communication technologies make a difference and reach out to more poor people or deliver better services to larger segments of society, the potential of information and communication technologies and information management will remain unrealized.

9. Harnessing and spreading the potential of the new communication technologies to countries, especially in the developing world, in a timely, cost-effective and equitable manner will be a daunting challenge. The telecommunication infrastructure is weak in virtually all developing countries. The 59 lowest income countries (which account for about 56 per cent of the world's population) share only 7 per cent of the world's telephone mainlines. Excluding China and India, the 57 lowest income countries (which together account for one fifth of the world's population) have one hundredth of the global telephone mainlines. Wherever there is connectivity, it is limited to major cities, the waiting lists are long and there is no indication that the situation will improve dramatically soon. Within the limits of its resources and priorities, the United Nations system stands ready to assist Governments in designing national policies, plans and strategies to facilitate and guide the development and management of an appropriate national information infrastructure, in accordance with their needs and traditions.

10. Information and communication technologies hold the prospect of an accelerated introduction of certain state-of-the-art technologies, superseding the step-by-step process of transferring know-how and technologies that has dominated industrialization processes. Successful leapfrogging will allow developing countries to advance, bypassing stages of technology development. Although aware of the considerable practical hurdles, we are nevertheless determined to assist developing countries in that quest.

11. We are equally conscious of the imperative to build human and technical capacities to enable societies to facilitate access and make best use of the new multimedia communication resources. The rapid expansion of the Internet and its interactive character have introduced a dramatic paradigm shift in the retrieval, handling and dissemination of information. Such technologies make it

possible for those who need information and knowledge to look for it on an electronic network and download what they need when they need it. The explosion of the Internet and the World Wide Web have created an easy-to-use communication interface for linking together computers in every part of the world for communications, information and data exchange, that is, for those who can afford it.

12. The emphasis on such networks as the Internet, however, should not distract from the potential role and contribution other information and communication technologies can make in advancing sustainable human development. Advances in CD-ROM technology, for example, have made multimedia and large-scale data transfers accessible to developing countries, even in areas where there is no telecommunication connectivity. Many of the multimedia options, especially the Internet, depend on the availability of reliable, powerful telecommunication connections with a sufficient bandwidth, as well as access to electricity grids or renewable energy, such as solar power, which are other limiting factors in the poorest areas. Widespread illiteracy, diverse cultures and linguistic differences pose additional obstacles for the introduction of new technologies on a universal basis.

13. Massive investment in telecommunication networks throughout the world has helped to link most developing countries to international telecommunication networks, albeit in most cases only their capital cities. To date, that connectivity invariably bypasses rural areas and hinterlands of developing countries, where the incidence of poverty is highest. We believe, therefore, that the expansion of domestic telecommunication infrastructure to rural areas and its connection to reliable international networks must become a top priority for Governments, the private sector and multilateral and bilateral development organizations. Unless telecommunication systems can be expanded, access will be confined to an urban, literate elite in developing countries, bypassing rural areas and the poor. Here, rapidly emerging digital satellite systems offer new solutions.

14. One indication of the magnitude of investment required is the estimate that in sub-Saharan Africa, raising teledensity to 1 telephone mainline per 100 inhabitants (from the current 0.46 mainlines per 100 inhabitants) would require an investment of US$ 8 billion. The estimate assumes, however, that the cost of a mainline closely mirrors prevailing international prices, whereas experience shows that, typically, the cost tends to be about three times higher in sub-Saharan Africa. The enormity and scale of the challenge to provide universal access in basic communication and information services to the developing world would thus make it advisable to focus on the community level and on reinforcing major development missions, such as education, rather than the household or individual level. Even so, harnessing and spreading the potential of the new information and communication technologies to developing countries will be a daunting challenge.

15. The organizations of the United Nations system alone cannot undertake such a massive and exceedingly costly investment, which will help to alleviate poverty, create new livelihoods and open up new markets. We call upon the private sector, Governments, civil society and other development organizations to engage with us in a purposeful and systematic endeavour to shape and manage this process by:

(a) Establishing and promoting a common global vision and broad-based awareness of the changes taking place, and articulating a compelling vision and strategy of how new technologies can be made to benefit all countries, particularly the poorest;

(b) Building national human, technical and economic capacities to facilitate access to and utilization of information and communication technologies in developing countries;

(c) Promoting multimedia information and communication technologies in the delivery of programmes advancing sustainable human development, especially to rural areas;

(d) Promoting, with the participation of the private sector, the creation, management and dissemination of strategic information and data pertaining to the various dimensions of development at the global, regional, national and community levels.

16. We are conscious of the fact that modern communication links, especially Web-based approaches, will have a material impact on programmes, programme content, modalities and quality of delivery, and hence on the future of multilateral cooperation and technical assistance per se. For our part, we will accelerate our ongoing internal reform and change processes to create modern, cost-effective and globally networked organizations, involving a strengthening of our in-house technical capacities and changing staff attitudes and perceptions, especially among senior managers. Another objective will be to strengthen ties and intensify communication among our remote offices, opening up opportunities for decentralization and for an instantaneous presence of technical back-up and support.

17. In addition, we intend to harmonize and coordinate our strategies for modernizing and enhancing capacities and effectiveness. The objective will be to create a United

Nations system-wide "Intranet" (an Internet for internal usage) to facilitate cooperation among the organizations and ensure the integrated exploitation of the competencies of organizations and coordination at the national level. We shall seek to promote cooperation among our respective organizations through the use of compatible systems, which we already pursue through the separate mechanism of the Information Systems Coordination Committee. We aim to ensure the compatibility, accessibility and convergence of communications and computer-based systems.

18. All of this must be complemented by constantly updated and well-managed Web sites for each of our organizations offering hyperlinks to relevant Web sites both within and outside the United Nations system. This will confer competence and global authority to our organizations in the electronic age. Indeed, as assessing reliability becomes difficult, with more than 65 million Web pages on the Internet, the entities of the United Nations system should become Web focal points, each in their area of competence. We must strive to make our Web sites the foremost entry points for information on poverty, development and sustainability, and universal human values and heritage. The Information Systems Coordination Committee, which was established in 1994 with the intent of harmonizing the approaches of United Nations organizations and facilitating access to United Nations related information, has made a good start.

19. We also need to explore and comprehend the implications and potential of the error of information and communication technologies. Do rapid technological advances trigger the emergence of a right to communicate and a right to access information? What are the consequences for the global labour market, including the gender impact and the role of trade unions, and the international division of labour; the prospects for access to global markets for goods, products and services from developing country economies; the opportunities for global sourcing; the scope for participatory approaches involving youth, local and community groups, women and indigenous organizations, and other disenfranchised groups; the impact on the elderly; the consequences for traditional postal services; the dimensions of international copyright and trade in services?

20. At present, innovation in terms of choices, approaches and content responds by and large to the needs and perceptions of industrialized countries and their business sector. We suggest that innovations for both hardware and software must also become demand-driven and needs-driven so as to respond to development objectives and needs. Such a shift from supply-driven to needs-driven approaches must become a global priority, and must influence the direction and pace of future innovation. Only then can information and communication technologies take hold and make a significant impact in developing countries, which are after all the markets of the future. Among other things, this will require the design of products suitable for use in electricity-poor environments (including hardware independent of electric power, such as solar-based or crank-technology driven hardware) and for use by illiterate people (facilitating accessibility through iconographic software, and culturally and linguistically diverse content). Partnerships and alliances will, however, be driven both by technical and financial realities.

21. Thus, we are particularly concerned by the staggering financial needs required to narrow the present gap between those who have access to information and those who have not. A scarcity of funds and insufficient investment flows inevitably hamper the modernization of telecommunication networks and the introduction of promising technologies for advancing sustainable human development. As official development assistance flows are not projected to increase dramatically over the next few years, we must stimulate innovative approaches to raise a critical mass of resources.

22. In our view, the sheer magnitude of the task will necessitate the urgent formation of new and novel cooperative mechanisms:

(a) Industry alliances linking developed and developing countries;

(b) Collaborative partnerships across traditional lines, that is, among the Government, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, foundations, academic entities, actors of civil society, and intergovernmental and international organizations.

23. We, the heads of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, have agreed to pursue cooperatively and in a more systematic manner the development of strategic approaches to the broad issues of the global information economy and society; therefore, we have agreed to commit ourselves to improving universal access to basic communication and information services.

24. In order to demonstrate our ability to bridge the information gap, we have agreed to undertake, through coordinated action at the country level, pilot projects in the broad areas indicated in the appendix hereto.

25. The involvement of Member States is essential in responding to the challenges of change. We therefore invite the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, to bring the present statement to the attention of the General Assembly with a view to seeking its endorsement. Executive heads will also submit the statement to the governing bodies of their respective organizations.

Appendix

Indicative areas for possible pilot projects

1. *Interactive long-distance education and learning.* Conventional teaching and learning methods are increasingly unable to respond to the rising demand for learning, driven by burgeoning illiteracy, a dearth of well-qualified teachers and faculty, shrinking public funds for the educational sector, and the growing acceptance of the concept of lifelong learning in a world driven by rapid change. At all levels of the educational process, long-distance education can become a viable complement to conventional schooling and training, in particular reaching out and delivering educational services to isolated countries and regions, which often are the poorest. Where even television may prove to be unaffordable, one must rely on radio and the development of community-based media, especially rural radio.

2. *Telemedicine.* Telemedicine comprises opportunities for medical practice and education through the combination of telecommunication and medical technologies. Telemedicine allows interactive audiovisual communication between physician and practitioner in distant locations, facilitates the exchange of medical information for research and educational purposes, and enables diagnostic imaging and clinical analysis from a distance to compensate for a lack of specialists or to dispense advice to doctors. Electronic means may thus help to improve the quality and delivery of health and reproductive services to rural areas. Access to computer and telecommunication services can help to transform the role of health workers, and to enhance the quality and outreach of health services and preventive health care in underserviced rural communities.

3. *Telebanking and micro-credit schemes.* Telebanking can assist banks in adjusting to the needs of the poor, communicating with the illiterate and poor at the village level and promoting micro-credit schemes. The available technology is tailor-made for a market characterized by a vast, impoverished and mostly illiterate rural population, high crime and widespread fraud.

4. *Environmental protection and management.* Environmental protection and management is a wide field for various applications of information technologies, including sustainable forestry and logging practices, waste management and disposal, support to agricultural extension services, water resource management, managing irrigation and natural resource exploitation.

5. *Participatory processes, arrangements and good governance.* Communication is not only a means to disseminate knowledge, information and values, it is also a basic component of all democratic societies. Its instantaneous character is bound to affect decision-making in the political, economic and business spheres. It will also have an impact on democratic (or autocratic) systems and governance structures, affecting their responsiveness, transparency and accountability, and will strengthen participatory and people-centred approaches within civil society, empowering especially women and youth. The technology is suitable for creating at the community level novel structures to manage individual and public affairs by all stakeholders in sustainable development and for empowering those most affected by poverty by providing broad-based access to information and partners.

6. *Virtual laboratories for solving development problems.* New methods of work which were still unthinkable just a year ago are now possible. By combining the Internet, virtual reality, real time 3D computing, other telecommunication technologies, groupware and virtual team work, it is now possible to create permanent invisible colleges of scientists working on critical research subjects, at relatively little cost. The principal objective is to link researchers aware of the special needs and with knowledge of the developing countries to the infrastructure and practices already firmly established in the developed countries in order to provide access to scientific know-how and information more quickly, on a larger scale and in an interactive format, allowing for the most rapid dissemination of such information. Those techniques are one solution to the South-North brain drain, which would allow scientists from the South to be associated virtually with all key discussions taking place in the world research community.

7. *Universal access to the world's knowledge and culture.* Public information institutions, which are a natural focus for access to the information needed for development, have not been able to exploit their potential to the full in developing countries owing to the immensity of the needs involved and scarcity of resources. Information and communication technologies provide such institutions with a means to promote cost-effective, development-oriented information services for all sectors of society, building on networking at the national and regional levels. Of particular importance is information in the public domain that the information market seems to neglect, for varying reasons: insufficient potential profitability, small readership or, more paradoxically, the public nature of the original data. Such

information should be inventoried, digitized and accessed with Internet servers, with the support of appropriate public policies on copyright issues related to information technologies, the development of electronic cultural industries and the promotion of the Internet as a public utility accessible to all at the lowest possible cost.